



VAMC Anchor

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Patient Transporters

by Rachel Fakunle

Before finishing my summer internship at the Providence VAMC, I sat down and talked with one of our volunteer inpatient transporters—Mr. Ronald Hardwick. Mr. Hardwick served in the United States Army from 1960-1999—from the early days of the Vietnam War to the first Gulf War and beyond. An improper placement of a rod in his knee brought him to the Providence VAMC for treatment, and that was a major turning point in his life. His positive patient experience here at the Medical Center left him with a desire to help the staff and Veterans any way possible—and that he has done for the past several years as an inpatient transporter. The inpatient transport program, Mr. Hardwick explained, gives volunteers a chance to not only help Veterans but also the employees that serve our Veterans. He enjoys being an inpatient transporter because he's able to interact positively with the different personalities that he comes across on a daily basis. He says he wouldn't change it for the world, and his dedication hasn't gone unnoticed. Upon volunteering 4000 hours, he received a President's Award lapel pin. When asked if he would continue in this position as a transporter, his rapid response was "I will continue to serve our Veterans until I am physically unable to." After transporting the Veteran to his/her destination in the hospital, he always says "Thank you for allowing me to serve you." His advice to everyone involved with patient care is to "have an open mind and have a genuine heart in helping others or it will show eventually."

You may not be aware that volunteer inpatient transport is only one facet of the facility's patient transport program. There are two other categories—an outpatient transport service under the auspices of the Veterans Resource Recovery Center's (VRRRC) Incentive Work Therapy (IWT) Program as well as paid transporters. Although these groups serve our Veterans in a similar capacity, they have separate responsibilities and limitations. Both paid transporters and unpaid volunteers work under the direction of the Nursing Service—three of the transporters work the day-shift until 4:00 p.m., and one works the evening shift from 4:30 p.m. – 12:00 midnight. Paid transport personnel are given classes which instruct them on the proper use of wheelchair equipment as well as the management of the oxygen tanks that sometimes accompany them.

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August 2010

Marie Hogu (Human Resources)
Ashley Anthony (Nursing)
Brittany Condon-Henry (Nursing)
Kimberly Harrington (Nursing)
Ashley Sylvestre (Nursing)
Amy Weidele (Nursing)
Caryn Amedee (Nursing)
Cassandra Hall (Nurse)
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Julianne Hartley (Nursing)
Laura Akinola (Primary Care)
Nancy Gilbride (Prosthetics Research)
Erin Johnson (Research)
Judith Lansing (Sensory Rehab)
Heather Cayouette (Social Work)
Maximo Arias (Social Work)
Sara Joy Dooley (Social Work)
Pauline Imbruglia (Social Work)
Julie Lyons (Social Work)
Bethany Romoser (Social Work)
Ivy Teixeira (Social Work)
Sunil K. Rao (Surgical Service)
Beth Ryder (Surgical Service)

YES, WE RECYCLE!

By Bill Beretta



Although not always evident, recycling activities have been taking place at the Medical Center for some years now. Items that we routinely recycle include corrugated cardboard, office paper, *(Continued p.2)*



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Director's Spotlight

Last Friday, I had the privilege of attending two momentous events—the first was Rhode Island's first annual POW/MIA (Prisoner of War/Missing in Action) Commemoration and Remembrance Day Ceremony held at the State House; the second was opening day of last weekend's 17th Annual Operation Stand Down.

I know that in the minds of many people having Rhode Island's first POW/MIA Commemoration and Remembrance Day Ceremony was long-overdue. I was proud to be a part of this occasion. During the Ceremony, two of our own World War Two Veterans were invited to speak. Mr. Roland Stumpf (Commander, Chapter One Rhode Island American Ex-POWs who was held in captivity in the European Theater), and Mr. James Brennan (a Bataan Death March Survivor who was held in captivity by the Japanese for three years) shared their experiences. Their comments humbled me and made me appreciate even more the debt of gratitude we owe our Veterans. You can read more about the event by clicking [here](#).

That afternoon, several of us also visited Operation Stand Down at Diamond Hill State Park in Cumberland. Operation Stand Down, as you may already know, was modeled after the 'Stand Down' concept used during the Vietnam War to provide a safe retreat for units returning from combat operations. Operation Stand Down helps area homeless Veterans secure social, medical, legal, and housing assistance. Achieving this worthwhile objective, however, requires a wide-range of support services—all in one location. While there, I was able to meet with many members of our staff: doctors, nurses, counselors, medical technicians, and administrative support personnel. Each compassionately volunteered his/her time and skill alongside representatives from the Providence VA Regional Office, our local Vet Centers, Johnson and Wales University, and several other community organizations. We even had a mobile van loaned to us by White River Junction VA Medical Center. It was a magnificent team effort.

WILLIAM J. BURNEY
Acting Medical Center Director

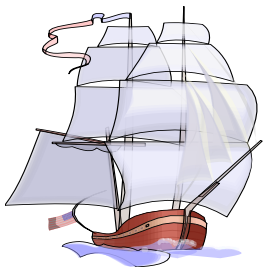
We Recycle (continued)

rechargeable batteries, electronic equipment, precious metals, used oil, and fluorescent bulbs. For FY09, the following items and pounds were recycled.

Recycled Item	Pounds
Corrugated Cardboard	72,000
Office Paper	120,000
Rechargeable Batteries	1,350
Electronic Equipment	35,000
Precious Metals	842
Used Oil	400
Fluorescent Bulbs	725

You may be wondering how we recycled 120,000 pounds of office paper without any blue paper recycling bins cluttering up your offices, but the key to success in this area has been the Iron Mountain and Shred-It classified document shredding contracts that our Environmental Management Service implemented. Shred-It recycles all the paper we place in their gray bins, and that includes white and colored paper, file folders, envelopes, newspapers, and even magazines. Therefore, if you have office paper to throw away, please place it in the Shred-It bins and do your part to recycle office waste.

In the future we are hoping to increase our recycling activities by adding toner cartridges, cans, bottles, plastic containers, scrap metal, and wood pallets to the list of items being recycled. If any worker here at the Medical Center knows of any recycling opportunities, please contact me, Bill Beretta (GEMS Coordinator) at ext. 2637 with your ideas. All suggestions are welcome.



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Rheumatology

branch of internal medicine devoted to the diagnosis and therapy of conditions and diseases affecting the joints, muscles, and bones

Specialty Clinic Corner

1. Overview: Rheumatology addresses clinical problems of the musculoskeletal system, including joints, soft tissues, certain autoimmune diseases, and the allied conditions of connective tissues. A rheumatologist is a clinician who has completed four years of medical school, three years of residency, and two to three years of fellowship training. The Rheumatology Clinic provides our Veterans with diagnosis and treatment of arthritis, autoimmune diseases, and systemic inflammatory diseases. There are more than 200 types of these diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gout, lupus, and vasculitis. The Rheumatology Clinic currently has two attending physicians; five fellows, and the support staff in B-Clinic.

2. Treatment and Testing Services: Rheumatology conducts both treatment and testing services. Most rheumatic diseases are treated with analgesics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids, and a number of new medications used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatologists work in conjunction with Physical and Occupational Therapy to develop a long term, coordinated multidisciplinary team approach for the management of individual patients. Rheumatology also provides testing services—from laboratory tests, to X-rays of affected joints and other imaging methods, to Cytopathology (diseases on the cellular level) and chemical pathology of fluid aspirated from affected joints (e.g. to differentiate between septic arthritis and gout)

3. Workload: The Rheumatology Clinic sees patients 2 days per week. There were 694 visits in FY 2009--220 of which were patients new to Rheumatology.

4. Patient Education: Scientific research is now dealing with the background of autoimmune disease, which is the cause of many rheumatic disorders. Epidemiological studies and medication trials have added a new dimension to the medical treatment of arthritic disorders.

written by Jackie Horner, R,N and edited by Dr. Bernard Zimmermann

"Transporters"

(continued from page 1)

They are required to learn safety measures with this equipment.

In addition to an inpatient transport system, the Providence VAMC also has an outpatient transport system under the VRRC's IWT program. The IWT consists of an array of Veterans seeking recovery-based vocational training. IWT involvement with the outpatient transporting system came about in response to an unmet need—a need for more escorts to transport our Veterans throughout the Medical Center. The overall IWT program has grown from 14 to 63 participants in the past year, and the program's outpatient transporters provided an additional 8,897 wheelchair transports to non-ambulatory Veterans.

(Rachel Fakunle, MPH, was a summer graduate intern in the Office of the Director.)



The Case of the Kidnapped Stepsister

Due to the large number of correct submissions, winners of August's **Intrepid Detective** were selected via a drawing. This month's winners are Nancy Crandall, Becky Shafer, Tamara Jolin, Christine Dyer, Heidi Coleman, Cynthia Averill, Olga DeJesus, and Regina Lynch.

Each will receive 2 free movie passes.

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Staff in the News

EMPLOYEE AWARDS

(From left) **Michael Goldstein, MD**, Chief, Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service, receives a certificate of appreciation during his farewell tea; **Officer Walter Golden** (Police Service) and **Craig Polucha**, Chief of Human Resources, receive **35-year service awards**.



...Around the PVAMC...

MHBSS employees **Bob Tilton**, **Liz Johnson**, **Judith Berger**, **Dawn Kentish**, and **Dr. Bill Carr** (top); and Primary Care's **Claire Bourgault**, **Steve Gautieri**, **Pilar Capili**, **Nick Souza**, **Yolanda Tangui**, and **Kristine Hastings** on site at Operation Stand Down; also, the Blind Veterans Association (BVA) recently held its 65th National Convention in Arlington, Virginia. In attendance were local Vietnam Era Veteran **Randy Durrigan** and World War II Veterans **Cliff Fisher** and **Earl Claudill**. During the Convention, Vietnam Veteran/PVAMC Volunteer **Carl Hytinen** was elected National Treasurer and Membership Chair for the BVA Auxiliary--click [here](#) for photos and story; finally, congratulations to **Clyde H. Belgrave, MD**, for his selection as **Chief, Pathology and Laboratory Medical Service**, effective August 29.



Got Story Ideas?

Please submit your ideas to
Thomas.Antonaccio@va.gov.

PVAMC Website



Need Enrollment Info?

Please call (401) 273-7100, ext. 3300